



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

BRADLEY J. SCHLOZMAN

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PROJECT CEASEFIRE

JURY CONVICTS ST. JOSEPH MAN FOR ILLEGAL FIREARM

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Bradley J. Schlozman, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, and Eric Zahnd, Platte County Prosecuting Attorney, announced that a St. Joseph, Mo., man was convicted by a federal jury today for being a felon in possession of a firearm. Today's conviction was the result of Project Ceasefire, the district's ongoing anti-crime initiative. As part of that program, a prosecutor in the Platte County Prosecutor's Office is specially designated to prosecute federal cases in the U.S. Attorney's Office.

"Project Ceasefire protects our neighborhoods by putting armed felons behind bars before they commit violent crimes," Schlozman said. "This is a good example of how law enforcement agencies are working together to prevent crime. We value our partnership with the Platte County Prosecutor's Office on this and other cases, and we appreciate the good work of the St. Joseph police officers and the federal agents who were involved in this successful investigation."

"This case represents just one example of the close cooperation between my office and the U.S. Attorney's office," Zahnd said. "Our goal is to prosecute dangerous and violent criminals without being limited by differences between state and federal law. Felons with guns and Internet predators don't care about jurisdictional boundaries, and we are committed to prosecuting criminals at both the state and federal levels."

Mark B. Davidson, 43, of St. Joseph, was found guilty of the charge contained in a Sept. 29, 2005, federal indictment. **Davidson** was in possession of a Hi-Point .380-caliber pistol when he was arrested on Jan. 27, 2004. **Davidson** fled from police officers, first in his vehicle then on foot, before being caught and handcuffed. While being transported in a patrol car, Schlozman said, the police officer noticed **Davidson** squirming in the back seat like he was trying to get something out of his back pocket. After **Davidson** was removed from the car, the pistol was found on the floor board near where he had been sitting. The pistol had eight rounds in its magazine.

Under federal law, Schlozman explained, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Davidson** has a 2003 criminal felony conviction for resisting arrest in Platte County, a 1994 criminal felony conviction for sexual abuse in Buchanan County, Mo., and a 1983 criminal felony conviction for trespassing in Pueblo County, Mo.

Following the presentation of evidence, the jury in U.S. District Court in Kansas City deliberated less than an hour before returning the guilty verdict to U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner, ending a trial that began this morning.

Under federal statutes, **Davidson** could be subject to a sentence of up to 10 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph W. Vanover. It was investigated by the St. Joseph, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Project Ceasefire

Project Ceasefire, launched in October 1999, is a cooperative initiative by federal and local law enforcement and the Kansas City Crime Commission that targets for federal prosecution persons who unlawfully use or possess firearms.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow